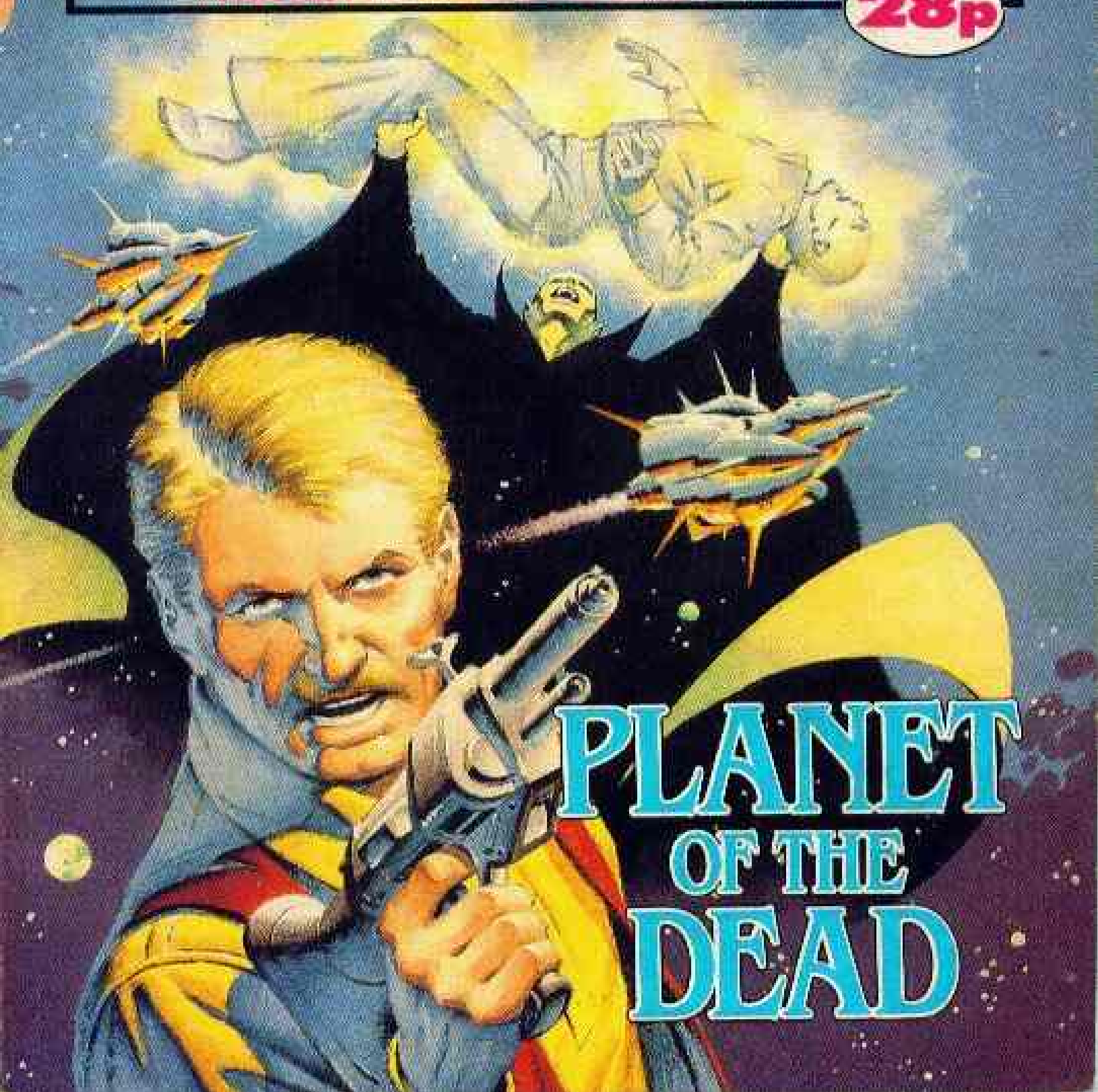


STARBLAZER

FANTASY FICTION IN PICTURES No. 208

28p



PLANET
OF THE
DEAD

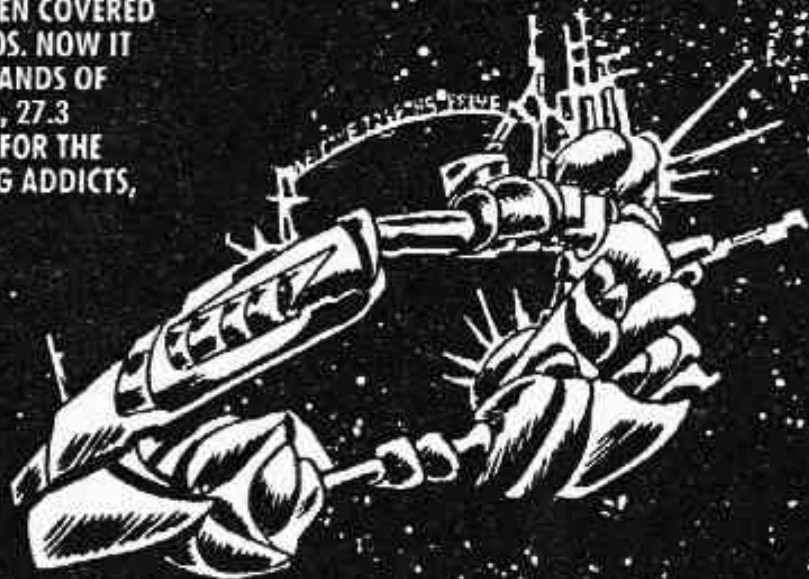
**DON'T FORGET THIS
MONTH'S *OTHER***



On sale at your newsagent's *NOW!*

PLANET OF THE DEAD

VEGAS PRIME — AN EARTH-TYPE PLANET ONCE RICH IN MINERALS. THE VAST CRATERS HAD BEEN COVERED BY SPRAWLING CITIES, BARS AND CASINOS. NOW IT RELIED ON GREED FOR ITS TRADE, THOUSANDS OF CREDITS CHANGING HANDS EVERY SECOND, 27.3 HOURS A DAY. IT HAD BECOME A HAVEN FOR THE DREGS OF THE GALAXY — CONMEN, DRUG ADDICTS, THIEVES, MURDERERS, AND WORSE.





SECONDS LATER THEIR PURSUERS SWARMED INTO THE ALLEY.

VISIT THE PLEASUREDOME

WOLFE (TO THE BOSS) (GASP)

IT WEREN'T TOO
CLEVER CHEATING OUR
BOSS. OUR BOSS
WISHES TO SPEAK TO
YOU.

I'LL TAKE
THEM, REL.

BUT OUR BOSS SAID HE WANTED
YOU CHASTISED FIRST.

BUT EVEN AS THE THUGS MOVED —

CRASSHHH!

WHAT? WHO FIRED
THAT BLASTER?

THE THUGS WHIRLED
ROUND TO SEE A LONE
FIGURE —



WHO YOU TO TELL
WE TO GO?

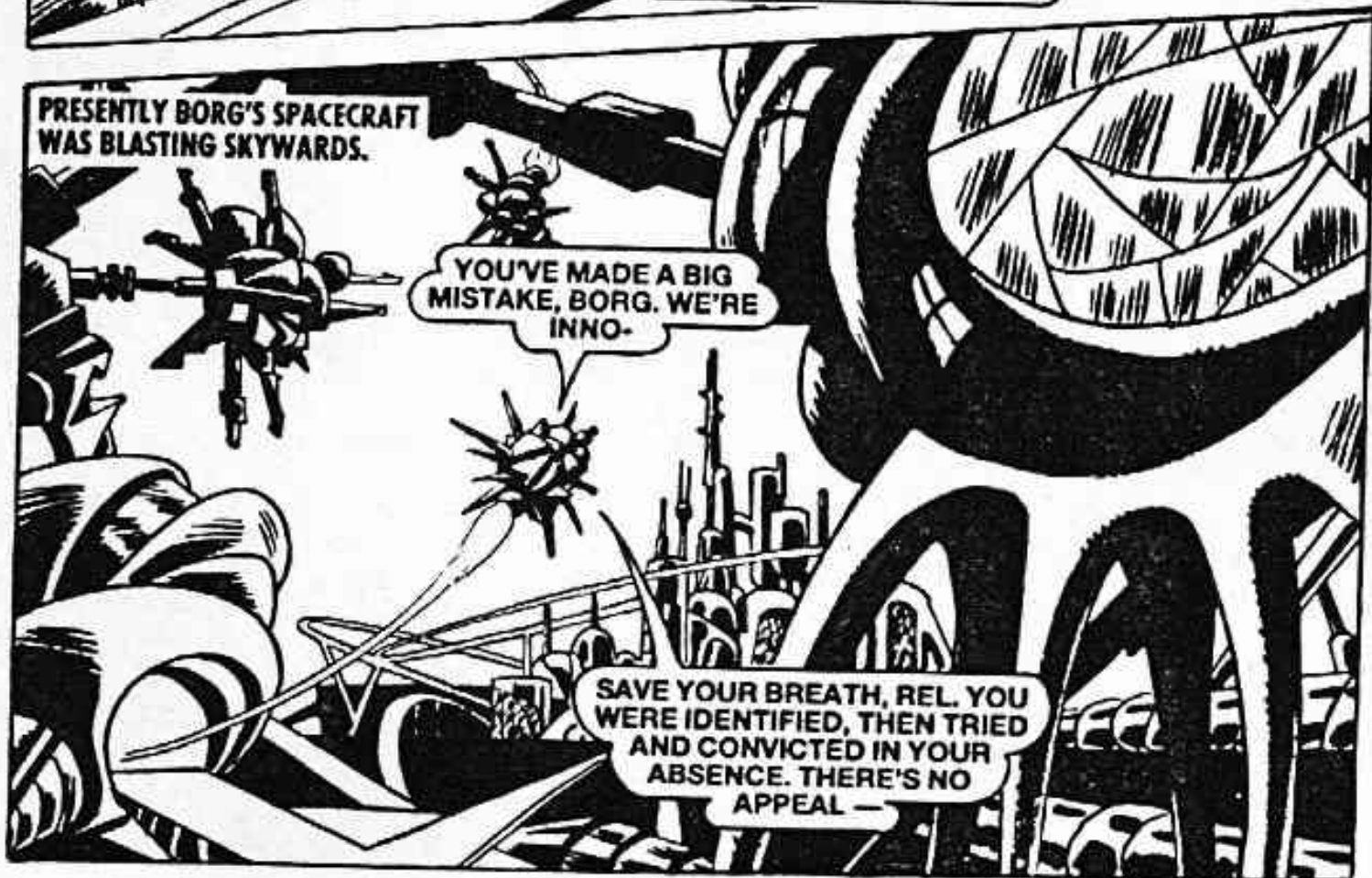
I AM BORG ...



WE GO!

THANKS, PAL ...







SOME TIME LATER —



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BUT AS THE BLADE PENETRATED THE LOCK —

AIEEE!

VERY QUIET!



WHAT IN THE GALAXY!





THE SHIP'S ON AUTO — IN SUB-SPACE — HEADING FOR QUADRANT BETA 7 WHEREIN THE PRISON PLANET LIES.

HURRY AND CHANGE COURSE, THEN WE MUST DEAL WITH BORG.

YOU CURS WILL PAY. I'LL ...

LOOK OUT!

BUT EVEN AS REL PULLED THE WEAPON FREE FROM ITS HOLSTER.

NOOO!



THE BLAST HIT A CONTROL MODULE. THE SHIP
SHUDDERED AND SLIPPED OUT OF SUB-SPACE.

CURSE YOU — THAT BLAST HAS
WIPED OUT THE SECONDARY
POWER RELAY SYSTEM.

FREEZE, BORG, OR
I'LL WIPE YOU OUT!



YOU WOULDN'T DARE
SHOOT ME! YOU'RE A
SECOND-RATE TRICKSTER,
NOT A KILLER...

YOU'RE PROBABLY RIGHT,
SO YOU'D BETTER HOPE MY
SECOND-RATE TRIGGER
FINGER DOESN'T SLIP...

CHI'EN BROUGHT THE FIRE UNDER CONTROL AS —

WITH BORG
SAFELY MANACLED,
THEY ASSESSED
THE SITUATION.

THE RELAY SYSTEM
NEEDS EXTENSIVE
REPAIRS. I CAN DO IT, I
THINK, BUT NOT WITH
THE EQUIPMENT TO
HAND —

THEN WE'LL FIND A PLACE
WHERE YOU CAN! I'M
SEARCHING THE STAR
CHARTS FOR THE NEAREST
INHABITED SYSTEM.

THEN TURN THAT MAP
ROUND — IT'S UPSIDE
DOWN!

THE DATA BANK PLANETARY
CATALOGUE SHOWS THE FIFTH
PLANET OF TEGAL MAJOR
SUPPORTS A SMALL COLONY. IT
SHOULD HAVE THE NECESSARY
FACILITIES.



THE SHIP TOOK MANY STAR DAYS TO
LIMP TO TEGAL MAJOR, THEN
SUNWARD TO ITS FIFTH PLANET,
WHERE —

THEY DON'T RESPOND
TO OUR SIGNALS ...

INSTRUMENTS SHOW THAT
THERE ARE NO TRANSMISSIONS
OF ANY KIND — TOTAL RADIO/VID
SILENCE — STRANGE ...

A CITY! DESERTED AND
DERELICT. WHAT HAS
HAPPENED HERE?

WHATEVER DISASTER STRUCK
THE COLONISTS DOWN
HAPPENED QUITE SOME TIME
AGO. THE NATURAL FLORA AND
FAUNA DISPLACED BY THE CITY
HAVE ALREADY DONE MUCH TO
RECLAIM THEIR TERRITORY.

PRESENTLY —



UNDER REL'S DIRECTION, BORG SET
DOWN THE SHIP NEAR TO WHAT
APPEARED TO BE A SPACEPORT, AND —

THIS LOOKS LIKE A
WORKSHOP — A GOOD
PLACE TO START OUR
SEARCH.

LET'S HOPE WE FIND WHAT
WE NEED SOON — THIS
PLACE GIVES ME THE
CREEPS.

SOME TIME LATER —

WE ARE IN LUCK! THIS
EQUIPMENT IS IN GOOD
ENOUGH CONDITION FOR
OUR PURPOSES.

GREAT COSMOS!

SOMETHING HORRIBLE
HAPPENED HERE — I'M
SURE OF IT ...





SOON BORG WAS SET TO WORK, A SEARCH OF THE WRECKED SHIP NEARBY PROVING FRUITFUL.


WE'VE STRUCK LUCKY. THIS SHIP'S POWER RELAY SYSTEM SEEMS TO BE COMPATIBLE WITH MY XZ3200 SYSTEM. I THINK I CAN RIG IT IN AND MAKE IT WORK.

THEN NO SLACKING, BORG. THE SOONER WE'RE AWAY FROM THIS PLACE THE BETTER!


AS THE REPAIR OPERATION CONTINUED WITH BORG TRANSPLANTING THE NEW COMPONENT INTO HIS SHIP, CHI'EN DECIDED TO EXPLORE.

MAYBE I CAN FIND A CLUE AS TO WHAT HAPPENED HERE. THERE ARE NO SIGNS OF AN ATTACK — JUST DECAY.

PRESENTLY —



MORE OF THE POOR WRETCHES.
MANY SEEM TO HAVE DIED IN
THEIR HOMES OR PLACES OF
WORK. ALL THIS HAPPENED A
GOOD MANY YEARS AGO
JUDGING BY THE STATE OF THE
PLACE.



THE CITY CHIEF'S OFFICE
AND HERE — HIS DAIRY.
MAYBE THIS WILL PROVIDE
SOME ANSWERS . . .

THE WORDS SCRIBBLED IN HASTE IN THE DIARY'S FINAL ENTRY ONLY HINTED AT THE FATE WHICH BEFELL THE PEOPLE OF TEGAL MAJOR FIVE. CHI'EN PICTURED THE SCENE IN HIS MIND'S EYE.



TOTAL SYSTEMS MALFUNCTION JUST AS WE LIFTED OFF. THE SHIP IS CRIPPLED! DEAD! FIRST THE COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM, AND NOW OUR ONLY SHIP IS USELESS. WE'RE CUT OFF. WE'RE AT ITS MERCY ...



"NO ONE COULD HAVE SUSPECTED. NOW THE FULL HORROR IS AMONGST US — A THREAT WE CANNOT CONTAIN. MY PEOPLE DEMAND ACTION YET THERE IS NOTHING I CAN DO. THERE IS NO ESCAPE FROM THE BLACK DEATH!"





CHI'EN ENTERED WHAT
APPEARED TO BE A
STORE ROOM.



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AS CHI'EN'S EYES BECAME
ACCUSTOMED TO THE GLOOM, AND HE
PEERED FURTHER INTO THE ROOM'S
FURTHEST RECESS ...

CHI'EN APPROACHED THE
STRANGE CAPSULE.

OH, MY STARS ...!

A SURVIVOR — HELD IN
SOME FORM OF
SUSPENDED ANIMATION BY
THE UNIT HE SOMEHOW
MANAGED TO CONSTRUCT.
SEALING HIMSELF AWAY TO
HOPEFULLY ESCAPE THE
FATE OF THE OTHERS ...

CHI'EN RETURNED TO THE
WORKSHOP AREA.

... AND HIS ONLY CHANCE WAS
TO WAIT FOR THE PLAQUE OR
WHATEVER TO RUN ITS
COURSE.

PLAQUE ... WELL HE'LL HAVE
TO WAIT A WHILE LONGER
UNTIL WE'RE FINISHED HERE.

SO CHI'EN WAS FORCED TO WAIT IMPATIENTLY AS BORG MADE THE FINAL ADJUSTMENTS TO THE SYSTEM THEN —



IT WORKS! YOU HAVE QUITE A TALENT AS AN ENGINEER, BORG.

SUCH WAS MY TRADE UNTIL I FOUND I WAS EVEN BETTER AT HUNTING DOWN THE LIKES OF YOU. I HAVE NEVER YET FAILED TO DELIVER AND I WILL FIND A WAY TO FULFILL THIS CONTRACT.

CHI'EN TOOK THEM TO THE CAPSULE.



HE'S NOT VERY PRETTY. I DON'T RECOGNISE HIS KIND.

NOR ME. HIS CHARACTERISTICS REMIND ME A LITTLE OF THE PEOPLE OF THE FANGORIAN SECTOR OUT IN THE FAR REACHES. HE'S VERY EMACIATED — LOOKS DEAD TO ME ...

CHI'EN PRESSED A BUTTON ON THE SIDE OF THE CAPSULE. THEY WAITED SEVERAL MINUTES, BUT —

PAH! NOTHING! NONE OF THESE BUTTONS SEEMS TO MAKE ANYTHING WORK.

NOR WILL THE COVER MOVE. IT LOOKS LIKE HIS SUSPENDED ANIMATION CAPSULE HAS BECOME A COFFIN. THE UNIT FAILED HIM —

JUST LIKE YOU FAILED BY RELAXING YOUR GUARD — HA!

URGH!

AGH!





CHI'EN RUSHED TO HELP HIS FRIEND WHO WAS BARELY CONSCIOUS.

I FEEL... SO... COUGH... WEAK. AS WE FOUGHT MY STRENGTH SUDDENLY DRAINED AWAY — AS THOUGH SOMEONE HAD PULLED A PLUG ON ME...

GRAPPLING WITH A BRUTE LIKE BORG WOULD HAVE THAT EFFECT ON ANYONE, MY FRIEND!

JUST THEN CHI'EN GLANCED INTO THE CASE...

HOLD ON! THAT HAND. IT'S... IT'S DIFFERENT. HE'S MOVED!

THAT'S HARDLY SURPRISING! WE GAVE THAT CASE QUITE A JOLT AS WE CRASHED AGAINST IT. GRUESOME IN THERE IS DEAD — THAT'S CERTAIN. THE QUESTION IS, WHAT DO WE DO WITH HIM?



AMIDST PROTESTS FROM CHI'EN, THE CAPSULE WAS TAKEN ABOARD.



AND SO, BORG PILOTED HIS SHIP SPACEWARDS.

SHE HANDLES PERFECTLY, EH, BORG? HEY, LOOK DOWN THERE. SOMETHING MADE QUITE A MESS OF THE COUNTRYSIDE. I WONDER WHAT HAPPENED?

WE'LL PROBABLY NEVER KNOW. ANOTHER ONE OF TEGAL MAJOR FIVE'S MYSTERIES WHICH WILL PROBABLY NEVER BE SOLVED.

YET AS THE SHIP ENTERED THE VACUUM OF SPACE, A MIND THAT HAD BEEN MERELY A DIM SPARK IN A WASTING BODY GREW A LITTLE BRIGHTER —

AND REMEMBERED THE CRASH ON AN ALIEN PLANET ...

BUT THE CREATURE, BAAL, BANISHED FROM A FAR OFF PLANET, HAD SURVIVED. AND WHAT BAAL NEEDED WAS FOUND IN THE SHAPE OF HUMAN ENERGY.

A STRANGE METABOLISM. HE'S UNLIKE ANYTHING I'VE — YEARRGHHHH!

SOON HIS POWER AND GREED KNEW NO BOUNDS. ALWAYS THE HUNGER...

AIEEEE! THE BLACK DEATH... HE WILL KILL US.

SOME HAD TRIED TO ESCAPE ON THE SHIP THAT HE WAS TO USE TO CARRY HIM TO NEW FEEDING GROUNDS. YET A FREAK ACCIDENT, NOT PLAGUE, BUT A LEAK OF DEADLY NERVE GAS, LEFT HIM STRANDED. ALL HE COULD DO WAS FIND A SAFE PLACE, FIND A WAY TO CONSERVE HIS DWINDLING ENERGY, AND WAIT...

WITH THE SHIP WELL ON COURSE FOR SEPTIM BLAISE YOUR SERVICES AS A PILOT ARE NO LONGER REQUIRED FOR THE MOMENT, BORG.

YEAH. TAKE A WELL-EARNED REST. I HOPE GRUESOME THERE WON'T GIVE YOU NIGHTMARES...

SO LONG TO WAIT... SO NEAR TO EXTINCTION... YET NOW...

AND SO —

WE'LL FIND A NICE BACKWATER WHERE WE'LL DROP YOU OFF FOR YOUR HOLIDAY FROM BOUNTY HUNTING.

SO I'M TO BE MAROONED, EH? NO MATTER. FOR WHEREVER YOU SCURRY TO IN THE GALAXY I'LL FIND YOU. NOWHERE WILL YOU BE SAFE FROM MY VENGEANCE ...

I WILL HUNT YOU DOWN. YOU'LL BE DELIVERED TO DEVIL'S ISLAND IN LITTLE PIECES. I'LL —

THE TROUBLE WITH YOU, BORG, IS THAT YOU TAKE LIFE FAR TOO SERIOUSLY. NO SENSE OF HUMOUR.

SOME TIME LATER AS CHI'EN CHECKED ON THEIR CAPTIVE AND CARGO.

EAT WELL, BORG. IRONICALLY WE WILL BE PASSING NEAR TO DEVIL'S ISLAND ON OUR WAY TO — ER — THAT'S OUR SECRET. REL IS THINKING OF JETTISONING YOUR ESCAPE POD OVER THE PRISON PLANET ITSELF. HE'S GOT A WEIRD SENSE OF HUMOUR.

YOU'LL REGRET THIS, THAT I VOW ...

CHI'EN FOUND HIMSELF ATTRACTED TO THE CAPSULE. YET AS HE PEERED AT ITS OCCUPANT —

F ... FEEL ...
SO TIRED ...

HIS MIND CLOUDED SO THAT HE WAS BARELY AWARE OF THE GHOSTLY TENDRIL OF ENERGY PIERCING THE SURFACE OF THE CAPSULE, THRUSTING, QUESTING UPWARDS ...

I ... I DON'T UNDERSTAND. M ...
MIND GETTING ... I ...

THEN TO HIS HORROR,
THE ALIEN'S EYES BEGAN
TO OPEN ...

OH, MY ... NOO ...

CHI'EN COLLAPSED —

WHAT IN THE STARS
IS GOING ON?!

THE TENTACLE OF ENERGY LEECHED MORE AND MORE OF CHI'EN'S LIFEFORCE, BAAL HUNGERED FOR MORE ...



IT LIVES!

THE ALIEN STRUGGLED TO EMERGE FROM ITS RESTING PLACE.

IT'S KILLING CHI'EN. I'LL BE NEXT. GOT TO REACH HIM BEFORE IT DOES.



BORG STRAINED TO REACH THROUGH THE BARS EVEN AS THE CREATURE CLOSED IN ON CHI'EN. THEN —

GOT HIM! MUST GET THAT BLASTER OR WE'RE FINISHED...

BUT EVEN AS BORG'S FINGERS CLOSED ON THE BLASTER,

SSSSSS!

AAAAHHH!



BORG BLASTED HIS WAY OUT OF THE CELL
EVEN AS THE CREATURE CRASHED AGAINST THE
FAR WALL AND LAY STILL.

THAT NOISE,
CHI'EN, I —

DROP YOUR
WEAPON, REL!

REL DIDN'T HESITATE—

HE'S VERY WEAK, BUT
THE PULSE IS STEADY.
WHAT IN THE COSMOS
HAPPENED TO HIM?

THAT CREATURE YOU BROUGHT
ABOARD MY SHIP WASN'T DEAD
AFTER ALL! I RECKON IT WAS
SUCKING AWAY HIS VERY
LIFEFORCE. I WAS NEXT ON
THE MENU.

BORG CONTACTED THE PRISON'S SECURITY SATELLITE —

IDENTIFICATION COMPLETE,
BORG. TWO MORE CUSTOMERS
FOR THE HOLIDAY CAMP, EH?
REPORT TO THE RECEPTION
DOCK WHEN YOU ARRIVE.

ORBITAL SECURITY
PLANET SURVEILLANCE
TRAFFIC CONTROL

IT'LL BE A PLEASURE. I'VE
CERTAINLY EARNED MY
COMMISSION WITH THESE
TWO JOKERS.

AS THE SHIP NEARED
THE PRISON PLANET.

IT WAS HORRIBLE ... THOSE EYES
BORING INTO ME ... FEEL SO
WEAK ... COULD THAT CREATURE
HAVE HAD ANYTHING TO DO WITH THE
DEATHS ON TEGAL MAJOR FIVE?

WE'LL PROBABLY NEVER KNOW
NOW, AND WHERE YOU'RE
GOING IT WON'T MATTER
ANYWAY, CREEP. LIKE I TOLD
YOU, I ALWAYS DELIVER.

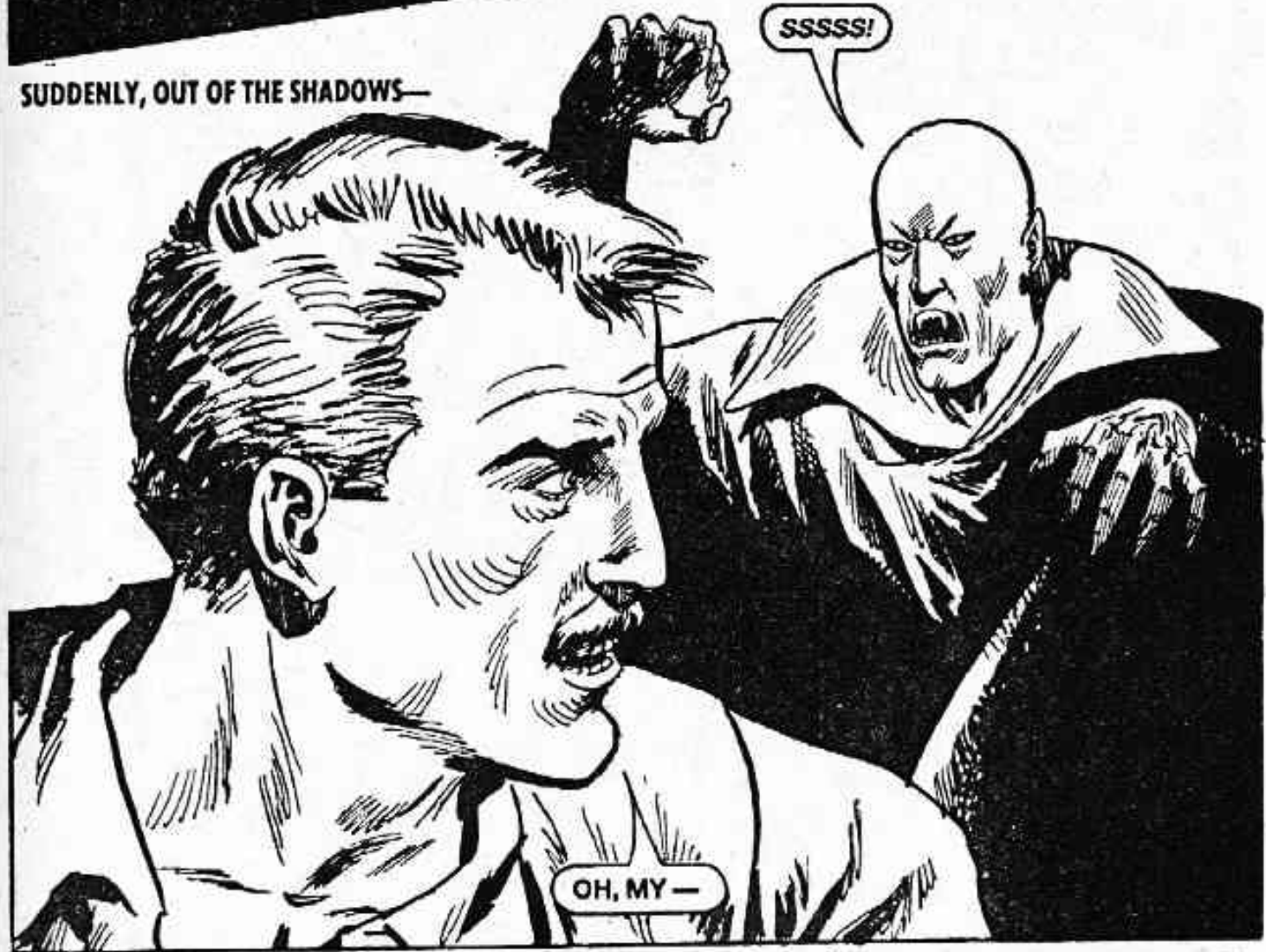
BUT LATER AS BORG WENT AFT TO CHECK ON SOME EQUIPMENT.

BLAST! A LIGHTING
MALFUNCTION BACK HERE —
WAIT — I DON'T BELIEVE IT —
THAT CREATURE WAS STONE
DEAD — RIGHT THERE!

SUDDENLY, OUT OF THE SHADOWS—


SSSSS!

OH, MY —



BORG REACTED LIKE LIGHTNING—

NO, YOU DON'T!



**BORG LOST NO TIME IN LEAPING
BACK TO THE CABIN.**

**ALIVE... I DON'T KNOW
HOW BUT THAT DEVILISH
THING IS STILL ALIVE!**



I'VE SECURED THE BULKHEAD MASTER LOCK, BUT SOMEHOW IT'S MAKING THE INSTRUMENTS AND SYSTEMS GO CRAZY.

YOU'RE SLIPPING OUT OF THE AUTHORISED APPROACH CORRIDOR, BORG. CORRECT YOUR TRAJECTORY IMMEDIATELY.



LOGGED COURSE DEVIATION CONTINUES, CONTROLLER.

BUT—

ANY COURSE DEVIATION WAS LOOKED UPON AS SUSPICIOUS, AND STEPS WERE TAKEN—

FIRE!

BY THE COSMOS — WE'RE HIT!



MOMENTS LATER THE SHIP WAS
SCREAMING DOWN THROUGH THE
ATMOSPHERE.

SHE'S BARELY RESPONDING. IT'S
GONNA BE A ROUGH LANDING.
THAT LAKE IS OUR ONLY CHANCE
— BRACE YOURSELF —

CONGRATULATIONS, BORG. YOU GOT
US TO DEVIL'S ISLAND. I HOPE IT WAS
WORTH IT — AARGHH!



MOMENTS LATER—

THERE'S ONE
CONSOLATION, THOUGH,
BORG. YOU'RE MAROONED
DOWN HERE TOO.

DON'T COUNT ON IT. LOOK,
SHE'S GOING UNDER — AND
THAT CREATURE WITH IT.

MEANWHILE, IN ORBIT ...

SCANS INDICATE THEY HAVE
CRASHED IN SECTOR 23. SHALL I
ORDER A FLIER DOWN TO CHECK IT
OUT?

THERE'S NO NEED. IF THE
CRASH DIDN'T KILL 'EM THEY'LL
BE DEAD WITHIN HOURS.
THEY'RE SMACK IN THE MIDDLE
OF SLIG TERRITORY ...

THE CONVICTS OF DEVIL'S ISLAND WERE LARGELY LEFT ALONE BY THEIR WARDERS IN ORBIT. OVER THE YEARS THEY HAD REVERTED TO SAVAGERY AND BANDED TOGETHER INTO TRIBES, EACH FIERCELY PROTECTING THEIR OWN TERRITORIES.

THREE MEN — AND ANOTHER, HAVE CRAWLED OUT OF THE WATER ...

THE SLIG WARRIOR FOLLOWED THE TRACKS UNTIL—

HAI JOURNEY'S END, FELLA ...

BUT—

WHA?
YEEEEEEARGH!THE SLIG'S DEATH
SCREAM WAS HEARD BY
BORG, REL AND CHI'EN.WHAT IN THE STARS
WAS THAT?THE TRIO HEADED DEEP INTO THE HILLS,
UNAWARE OF THE HORROR IN THEIR
WAKE ...AHHH,
SUSTENANCE ...KEEP MOVING!
THIS BLASTER
HAS BEEN
WATER-LOGGED.

SOON, AS THE WALLS OF A GORGE
CLOSED AROUND THE MEN AHEAD.

GIVE ME ONE GOOD REASON
WHY I SHOULDN'T LEAVE YOU
TO YOUR FATE.

YOU'D MISS OUR
COMPANY ...

MOMENTS LATER—

WHAT THE — ?

THIS WAY! MY BLASTER'S POWER
LEVEL IS DOWN — IT COULD FAIL AT
ANY MOMENT.

AS ANOTHER SPEAR FAILED ONLY
NARROWLY TO MISS ITS MARK BORG
KNEW THEY HAD RUN OUT OF TIME, SO—

THIS SHOULD BUY
US TIME.

THE OTHER WARRIORS DIVED FOR COVER.

THE WRETCHED WEAPON IS
TOTALLY DISCHARGED. THOSE
DEVILS WILL BE UPON US BEFORE
IT IS RECHARGED SUFFICIENTLY.


HE HAS A BLASTER!

A PRICELESS TREASURE ON
DEVIL'S ISLAND. I MUST HAVE IT. I MUST!

ANOTHER STRANGER.
KILL HIM!

HE'S MINE!





IT — IT'S HIM. HE
SURVIVED THE CRASH ...

HE'S MORE POWERFUL TOO —
GAINING STRENGTH WITH
EVERY VICTIM. LET'S GET OUT
OF HERE.

NOW YOU ...

BUT—

GREAT STARS. THIS WEAPON IS
RECHARGING SO SLOWLY.
MUST LEAVE IT AS LONG AS
POSSIBLE BEFORE —



WHAT'S THE POINT? BLASTER
FIRE BARELY HURTS THAT
CREATURE.

BUT BORG HAD OTHER IDEAS, AND, MOMENTS LATER—

LET'S SEE HOW HE
COPEs WITH THAT.

A GRANITE
SHAMPOO!



MY STARS. HE'S
STILL MOVING.



IF HE CAN SURVIVE EVEN
THAT THEN THERE IS NO
HOPE FOR ANYONE ON THIS
PLANET, WE ARE ALL
DOOMED...

THEY PRESSED ON, AND THE HILLS FINALLY
GAVE WAY TO A VAST, WINDSWEEPED PLAIN...

THERE'S NO SIGN OF
GRUESOME. I WONDER—

THERE'S SOME KIND OF STRUCTURE
OVER THERE IN THOSE ROCKS.

AS THEY REACHED THE ROCKS, HOWEVER—

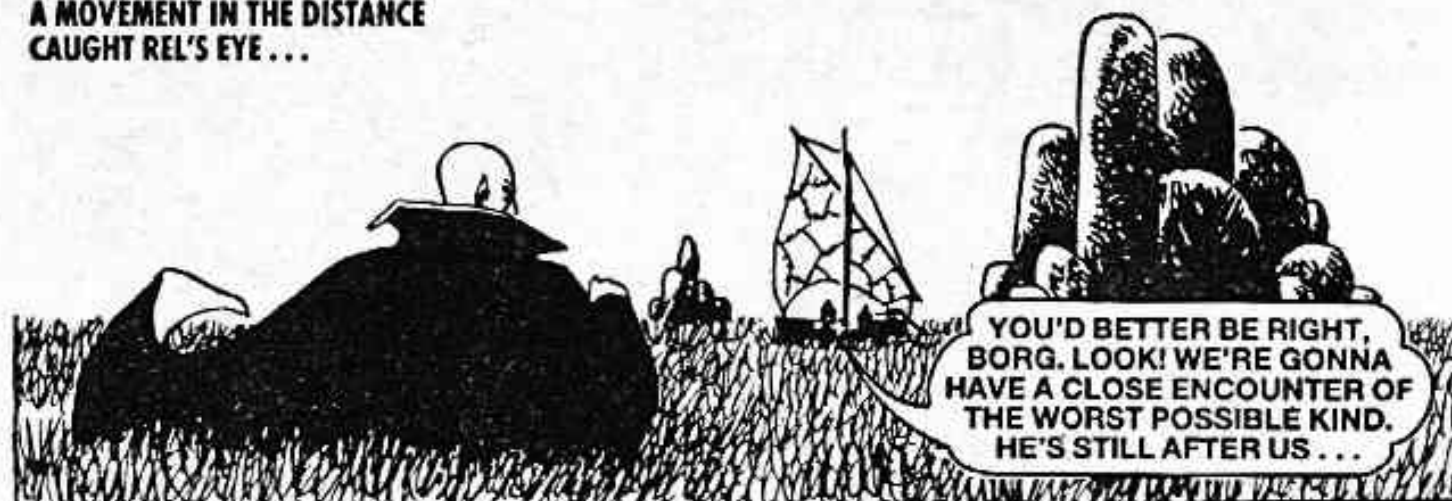
IT'S A VEHICLE — POWERED BY
WIND BY THE LOOK OF IT.

LOOKS LIKE THERE HAS BEEN AN
AMBUSH!





A MOVEMENT IN THE DISTANCE
CAUGHT REL'S EYE...



PANIC LENT THEM STRENGTH AND, AS THE PLAINS WINDS BEGAN TO FILL THE SAIL ...

OH MY STARS! HOW FAST CAN THAT CREATURE RUN?

JUST PRAY THIS BABY CAN GO FASTER. THEN SAY AN EXTRA PRAYER FOR WIND — AND PLENTY OF IT!

THEY CLUNG GRIMLY TO THE STRANGE CRAFT AS BAAL FELL BACK TO BECOME A SPECK ON THE HORIZON —

HE'S BACK THERE, SOMEWHERE ...

THAT RUN WILL HOPEFULLY HAVE DEPLETED HIS ENERGY, BUT SOMETHING TELLS ME HE'LL KEEP ON AFTER US. HE'S HUNGRY FOR US ...

THE WIND BORE THEM ONWARDS
ACROSS THE GRASSLANDS HOUR
AFTER HOUR, UNTIL —

THE LIGHT IS FADING FAST.
IT'LL SOON BE TOO DARK
TO STEER. WE'LL HAVE TO
STOP.

LOOK! SAILS — LOTS OF 'EM ...
TAKE EVASIVE ACTION!

BUT THE HUGE VESSELS MOVED WITH AN
AWFUL SWIFTNES TO INTERCEPT THEM.

A ZARBI YOTCRAFT, YET THOSE
ABOARD ARE NOT OF OUR
PEOPLE.

NOR WOULD THEY SEEM TO BE
SLIG OR VUNDAL. I AM
INTRIGUED. TAKE THEM ALIVE!

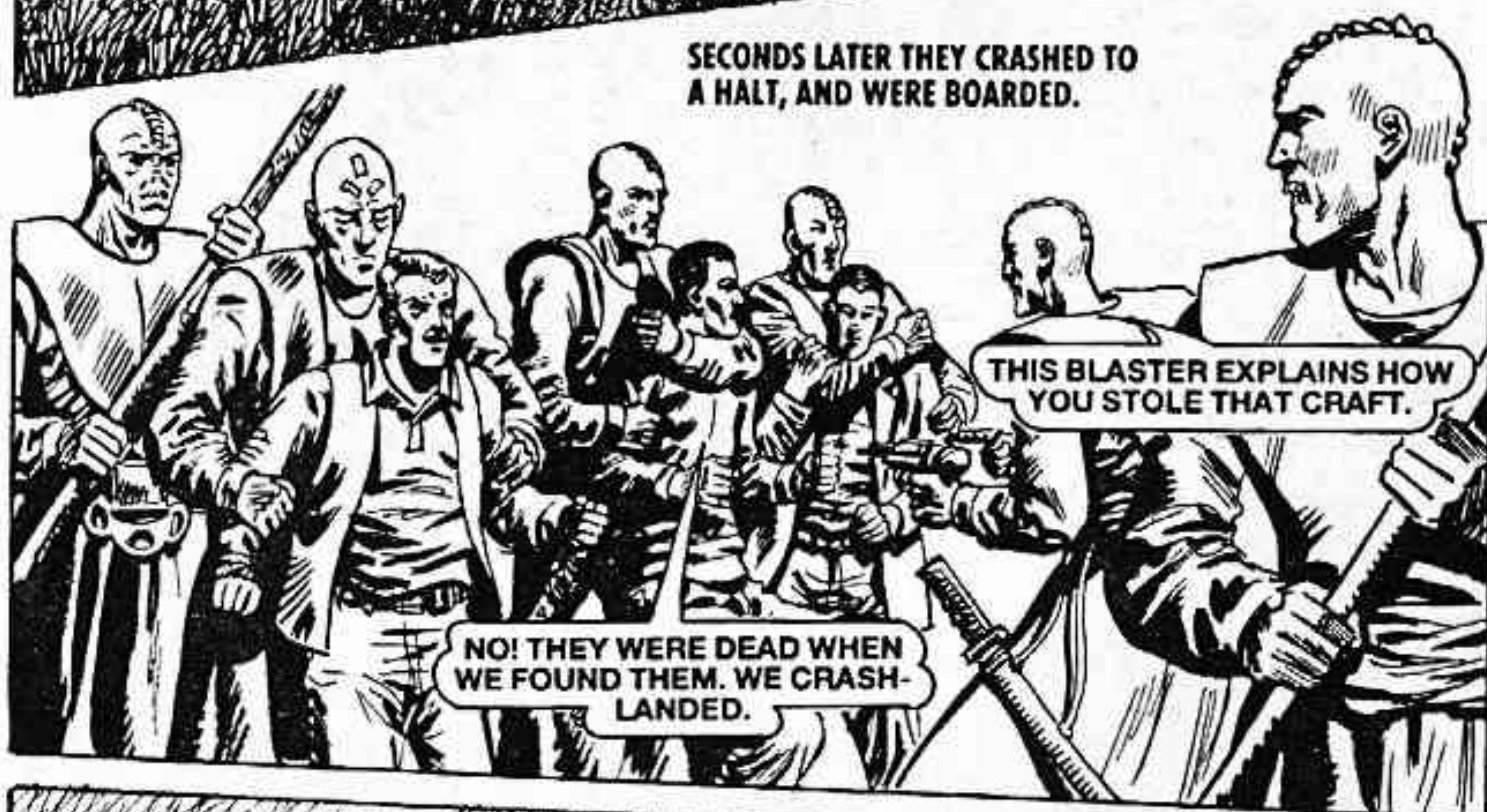
THE SAILCRAFT MOVED IN ...



THEY'RE STEALING OUR WIND.
WE'RE SLOWING. LOOK OUT!

AWAY, YOU
DEVILS.

SECONDS LATER THEY CRASHED TO
A HALT, AND WERE BOARDED.



THIS BLASTER EXPLAINS HOW
YOU STOLE THAT CRAFT.

NO! THEY WERE DEAD WHEN
WE FOUND THEM. WE CRASH-
LANDED.



WE HALT HERE FOR THE NIGHT.
KINDLE THE COOKING FIRES —
CIRCLE IN THE SAILCRAFT. WE
WILL HAVE OUR SPORT WITH
THESE DOGS LATER.

NO! WE MUST KEEP
MOVING. THERE'S A
CREATURE OUT
THERE ...

BUT THE ZARBI IGNORED THEIR PROTESTS,
AND LATER ...

BRING THE ONE IN THE
FANCY CLOTHES TO
THE FIRE. WE WILL
ROAST HIM FIRST.

'BOUT TIME ...

BUT BAAL HAD CAUGHT UP —

AIEEEE!





HIS GUARD DISTRACTED, REL SEIZED HIS CHANCE.



SECONDS LATER —

HURRY!



THE NIGHTMARE BEGAN —

THE ZARBI HAVE FORGOTTEN US. LET'S MAKE OUR ESCAPE.



THERE'S NOWHERE TO ESCAPE TO. WE'RE AS DOOMED AS THE ZARBI!

AT THAT MOMENT IN THE SKY ABOVE.



LOOKS LIKE SOMEONE'S WIPING OUT AN ENTIRE ZARBI FLEET. IT COULDN'T HAPPEN TO A NICER BUNCH OF PEOPLE. WE'D BETTER CHECK IT OUT, I SUPPOSE.

AS THE PILOT TOOK THE CRAFT LOWER —

WHAT IS THAT?

WHATEVER IT IS, IT DOESN'T
BELONG HERE. BLAST IT TO ATOMS!

MOMENTS LATER, THE SHIP LANDED NEARBY —

SECURE THE SHIP. THERE'S
SOMETHING STRANGE GOING
ON HERE THAT NEEDS
CHECKING OUT. TAKE
THE TANK.

QUICK — THIS IS
OUR CHANCE!



EVEN AS THE DOOR BEGAN TO RUMBLE SHUT.

MADE IT! NOW TO GET
OFF THIS DEATH PLANET.

YOU'RE ONLY GOING AS FAR AS
ORBIT, CREEP. ONCE THIS MESS
HAS BEEN SORTED OUT YOU'LL
BE BACK DOWN HERE WHERE
YOU BELONG.

AT THAT MOMENT NEARBY —

SUCH CARNAGE. WHAT COULD
HAVE — WAIT — A MOVEMENT IN
THE SHADOWS —

OH, MY — SHOOT —
SHOOT!

BUT, BAAL OVERTURNED THE TANK —



EVEN AS BORG TRIED TO FAMILIARISE HIMSELF WITH THE CONTROLS, BAAL LOOKED UP AT THE SKY WHERE FAR ABOVE HIM THE VAST ORBITAL COMPLEX WAS SWEEPING OVERHEAD ...



... FULL OF THOSE STUPID, PUNY BEINGS, HE HUNGERED DESPERATELY ...

... AND SPIED BEFORE HIM THE MEANS TO REACH THEM. AS FOR THOSE ON THE PLANET ITSELF, HE WOULD RETURN ...

WE'VE RUN OUT OF TIME. H... HE'S COMING FOR US. LIFT OFF, BORG, LIFT OFF!



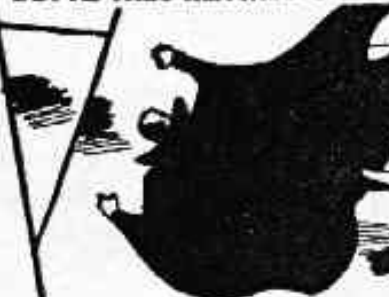
SECONDS LATER, AS BORG GUNNED THE SHIP SKYWARDS —



YAHOO! WE MADE IT!

WHOOOSH!

BUT AS THEY REACHED ORBIT —



WE'RE DOOMED. THERE'S NOWHERE ELSE TO GO — EXCEPT THE ESCAPE POD ...



I'M THROUGH
RUNNING. HELP ME
SUIT UP, REL. I'M GOING
OUT THERE TO FACE —

NO! THERE'S ANOTHER WAY. IT'S
PRETTY HAIRY, BUT IF YOU'RE SET TO
GO OUT IN A BLAZE OF GLORY
ANYWAY IT MIGHT JUST BE OUR
SALVATION.

MOMENTS LATER BORG WAS GEARED UP
AND SPEEDING TO THE AREA WHERE THE
CREATURE HAD PENETRATED THE SHIP.

WHY DON'T YOU USE A DOOR
LIKE THE REST OF US, UGLY.
CHEW ON BLASTERFIRE!

ESCAPE POD
READY, BORG.



SECONDS LATER, BORG WAS RUNNING FOR HIS LIFE.

THIS SUIT IS SO CUMBERSOME. GOT
TO GIVE THIS ALL I'VE GOT — FOR
ALL OF US!

DESPITE ITS BULK THE CREATURE
MOVED WITH FRIGHTENING
SPEED. BORG THREW HIMSELF
THROUGH SECTION AFTER
SECTION, UNTIL —

ESCAPE
FACILITY

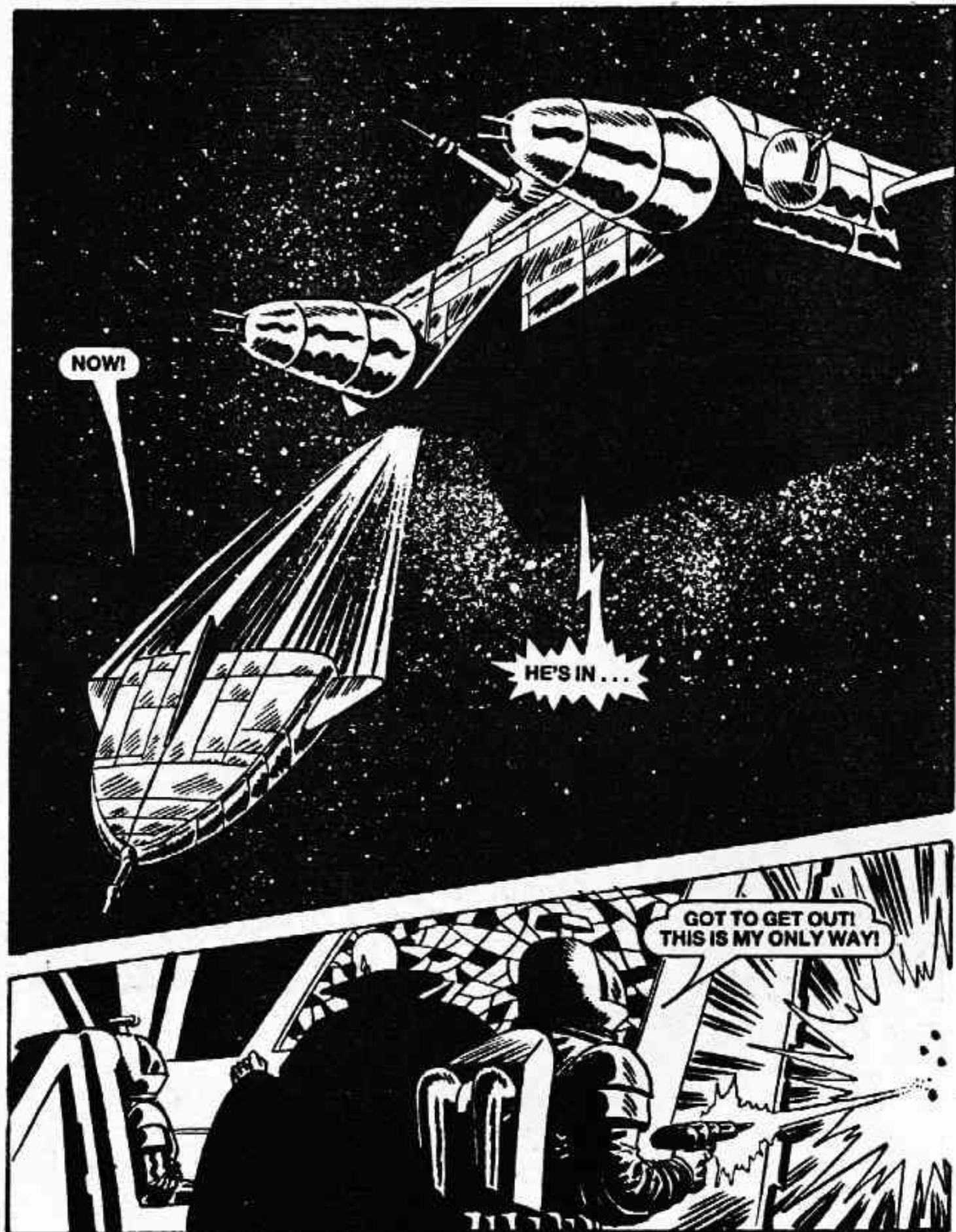
HURRY, BORG.
HE'S GAINING!

DOORS OPENING
SO SLOWLY ...

DOORS
SEALING

HIT THOSE SYSTEMS —



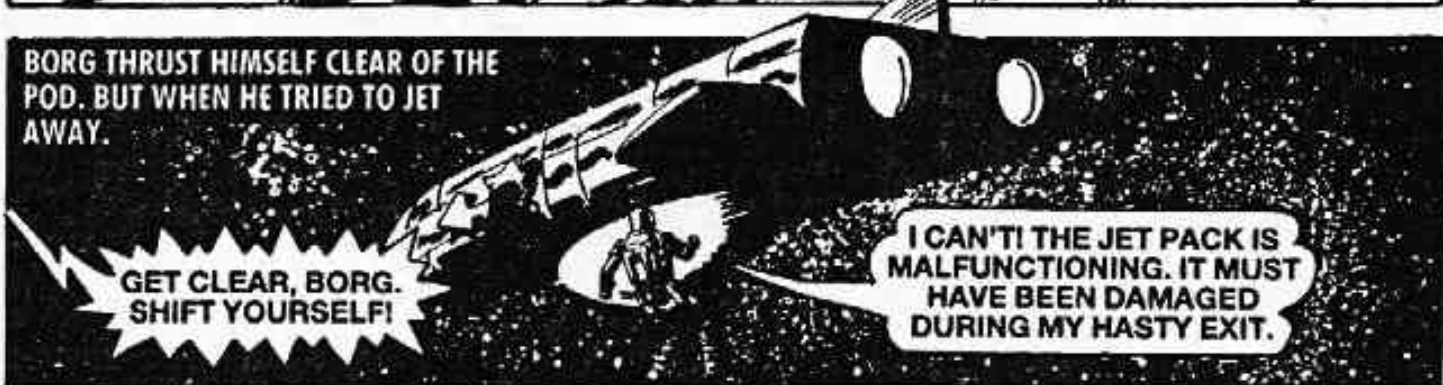


BORG STRUGGLED TO GET THROUGH THE RAGGED GAP EVEN AS THE CREATURE'S TALONS RIPPED INTO ITS VICTIMS.



HE FELL FOR THE EMPTY SUIT TRICK!

BORG THRUST HIMSELF CLEAR OF THE POD. BUT WHEN HE TRIED TO JET AWAY.



GET CLEAR, BORG. SHIFT YOURSELF!

I CAN'T! THE JET PACK IS MALFUNCTIONING. IT MUST HAVE BEEN DAMAGED DURING MY HASTY EXIT.

BORG DRIFTED WITH THE POD, UNABLE TO MOVE AWAY — STARING DEATH IN ITS FRIGHTFUL FACE.



GOT TO MAKE THIS WORK. HE'S REACHING FOR ME...

SUDDENLY —

WHAT IN — REL!

ACTIVATE REMOTE
NAVIGATION SYSTEM FOR
THE POD, NOW, CHI'EN.
WE'RE SUFFICIENTLY
CLEAR. SET THE CONTROLS
FOR THE HEART OF THE
SUN!

AND SO, THE POD BOOSTED
AWAY, ITS SYSTEMS LOCKED ON
A COURSE THAT COULD NOT BE
ALTERED, A JOURNEY THAT
MEANT DOOM FOR THE ONE
KNOWN AS BAAL ...

I DON'T UNDERSTAND, REL!
I HUNTED YOU — SHOWED
NO MERCY. YOU COULD
HAVE LEFT ME TO MY FATE
— ESCAPED ...

NEITHER OF US HAS EVER
HURT ANYBODY ...
CONNED, ROBBED AND
CHEATED, BUT NEVER
HURT!

BORG THE
BOUNTYHUNTER. I WANT
AN EXPLANATION FOR THIS.
WHERE ARE MY MEN?

I DON'T KNOW ... I KIND OF MISLAID
THEM WHEN WE WERE FIGHTING
THAT MONSTER. ANYWAY, THEY'RE
ONLY CHEAP CROOKS. CAN'T
WASTE MY TIME FOR A THOUSAND
CREDS A PIECE.

SOME TIME LATER AS THE
SHIP APPROACHED THE
ORBITAL STATION.

LATER, TWO FIGURES SLIPPED OUT OF THE SHIP, UNNOTICED.

THAT BORG
INSULATED US!

YOU MEAN INSULTED! NO ... HE
WAS RIGHT. BUT WHAT IF WE
CONNED THE ASTRAL BANK OUT OF
A FEW BILLION?

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